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THE DUAL REVOLUTION

by

Jaya Prakash Narain

A SARVODHAYA PUBLICATION

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SARVODAYA PRACHURALAYA
(Akhila Bharat Sarva Seva Sangh)
TANJORE

First Edition—Feb.'59]

Price 25 np.
[Price 50 nP

NOTE

We are glad to bring out in a book-form the speech of Sri Jaya Prakashji published in the January and February issues of 'Sarvodaya'. Though addressed to an English audience, being a masterly presentation of the whole movement of Bhoodan in all its various phases and their implications not from mere academic study but from personal knowledge and experience, it should be no less useful to others.

We again thank Mr. David Hoggett of Coleford, England for the favour of supplying us with a copy of the speech.

—*Publishers*

Rajan & Co. (Printers), Madras-1.

The Dual Revolution

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I must thank the United Nations Association of Coleford for giving me this evening's opportunity of meeting you all here and speaking to you about something which is very dear to my heart and which I think is of great importance not only for India but also, I hope, for other countries. The United Nations is engaged in many activities, but all of you would agree that its chief objective, and one in which today everyone is interested, is world peace.

Now the movement of which I am going to speak to you is one which aims not only at establishing world peace but at creating the foundations of a peaceful life. Although everyone is interested in the problems of peace, very few stop to question what the sources of human conflict may be, and why it is that in human society there is strife of every kind, including war.

The Foundation of Satyagraha

Mahatma Gandhi was an exception in that he tried to go to the root of this problem, and he built up a philosophy of life which was based on what he called Truth and Non-violence. In building up this philosophy he took help from

wherever he could. Many of you, I am sure must know how deeply indebted Mahatma Gandhi was to Jesus, and how he always considered the Sermon on the Mount to be his greatest single inspiration. The philosophy of turning the other cheek was the foundation of his whole *Satyagraha* movement that developed first in South Africa and then in India. Among modern thinkers, he acknowledged Tolstoy, Ruskin and Thoreau to be his teachers. Whatever he tried to do, he did with an open mind; nothing was foreign to him just because it happened in a foreign country. He was what might be called a universal personality. Now, Mahatma Gandhi applied that philosophy to the Indian freedom movement. I also was one of his humble soldiers and like so many Indians of those days, I had to spend several years in prison. During those years, the nationalists in India, the freedom fighters--had to go through all kinds of suffering, of which I think imprisonment was perhaps of a lesser variety. But, if any of you have the occasion to travel now to India, I think you will be surprised to find that there is no ill-will or bitterness anywhere for Britain or for the British people but, rather, a very warm welcome.

Only a few weeks ago, Mr. Macmillan paid us a visit, and I think he was surprised—and no

secret was made of it—by the general warmth of his reception, not only the official reception but the reception from the people themselves. Now, if Lord Attlee or Lord Pethwick Lawrence or the late Sir Stafford Cripps had visited India and met with this warmth, there would have been no surprise. But that a Tory Prime Minister should be so received is surely a tribute to the work that Mahatma Gandhi did for India—and, if I may say so, for Great Britain too.

Had he lived now!

He taught us during those days that even if we had to fight for our country's freedom we should harbour no ill-will, no hatred, no bitterness, for those against whom we were fighting. "Rather", he said, "we should have love in our hearts for the British."

This was a difficult lesson to learn, and many of us did not learn it so well. I think, if we had, the British affair would probably have been settled much earlier—perhaps the Hindus and Moslems would not have quarrelled as they did, and perhaps the country would not have been divided—but that is an old story.

Mahatma Gandhi did not live long after the independence of India. As you know, only a few months later he was assassinated. It is difficult to say now what he would have done

had he lived, and how he would have applied that same philosophy of Love and of Truth to the problems of independent India. There is no doubt that he would not have retired from public activity; he would not have gone to the Himalayas, as many Indians do towards the end of their lives, to contemplate and to pursue whatever other spiritual interests he might have had. He always used to say that he wanted to live for a hundred and twenty-five years so that he might be able to help India to go forward, and help to create the India of his dreams.

Vinoba in the Footsteps of the Mahatma

But it was our great good fortune that there was one among his disciples who was not content merely to tread the beaten path, and who had genius enough to be able to apply Gandhi's principles—the universal principles of Truth and Non-violence—to India's practical problems.

This was Vinoba Bhave, of whom some of you, I am sure, have heard. Vinoba Bhave was already an important person during Gandhi's lifetime, although he was not so well known as Mr. Nehru and others who were working in the political field. One little incident might give you some idea of the esteem and regard in which Gandhi himself held Vinoba.

During the war in 1941, Mahatma Gandhi had started a movement which he called Indivi-

dual Civil Disobedience. He did not think that there was occasion then, or at least a justification for a mass movement of civil disobedience. But he did not wish to let go unanswered the challenge which the British Government of that time had thrown to India when it said on the one hand that it was fighting for Freedom and democracy to India herself—a contradiction. And, therefore, as a matter of protest Gandhi had launched this Individual *Satyagraha*. That is, only those who in his view were qualified enough and equipped enough morally to offer Satyagraha, to offer Civil Disobedience—would be allowed to do so. He had drawn up a fairly long list, and on that list the first name was that of Vinoba Bhave. He had selected him as the first *Satyagarhi* out of all his thousands of followers. The second name on that list was that of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, our Prime Minister. So, that little incident might give you an idea of what Mahatma Gandhi thought of Vinoba.

Vinoba is no longer a young man—he is 64 years old. He is a man who, in the tradition of ancient India, would be considered to have renounced the world—a concept which I find the West does not understand. What does it mean, this renouncing the world? Vinoba has no home, no property, no family; he is what we would have called in the ancient days a *rishi*, a seer. He

is a deeply religious person, a man of God, a person who considers whatever he does to be in the pursuit of spiritual ends rather than of any social, economic, or political end. He is also a very deeply learned individual, very erudite; a great Sanskrit scholar. You know we have many languages in our country; he knows them all, including Tamil. It is a great achievement. He wanted to study the Koran, so he learned Arabic; he is a deep student of the Bible (not in Hebrew of course, but in English); he knows French well enough to read, and at presnt is learning German from a German girl who happens to have joined his entourage recently. He is indeed a wide-awake person.

The Beginning of Bhoodan

Now this Vinoba Bhave whom Gandhi selected to be the first *Satyagrahi* has started a movement that may be described as an extension of the work that Gandhi himself was doing in India, a work which was interrupted by his assassination. This movement originated in somewhat dramatic circumstances. More than seven years ago, early in 1951, Vinoba was travelling on foot in an area that had become very disturbed on account of Communist guerrilla activities. The Communists were trying to establish a foothold for themselves—a small Red China as it were—from where they could operate

and expand outwards and gradually establish themselves over the whole of India, much in the fashion in which Mao Tse Tung had operated in China. The government of India was hard put to it trying to suppress this violent guerrilla warfare. During the day, the Communists would hide in the hills and jungle (that whole area is rather hilly and covered with forest,) and at night they would swoop down on the villages and commit murder, arson, and loot. In this way they had been carrying on for months and months. Vinoba felt that he should go to this area to give the people the message of non-violence and love. It was a very courageous thing to do. The government of India offered him armed protection, which he refused, and with his small band of workers, not more than half a dozen, he went from village to village on foot, speaking wherever he went.

One day, after his evening talk in a fairly arge village, an old untouchable from the back of the audience got up, placed his palms together and said, "Sir, this is all very well, this talk of *Ahimsa*—non-violence ; I understand all this, and we are not against it. But here, sir, we are the landless people of this village, and there are the landowners, sitting around you." (It is always so, that the prominent people sit on the dais and the common people in front and below !)

So this old man said, "These are the rich landlords around you, who have hundreds and thousands of acres of land. We till their fields and it is by *our* labour that they are so wealthy and rich, while we ourselves do not have even a decimal of land. Therefore, sir, we want land for ourselves."

The Challenge

Now this old untouchable threw a challenge to Vinoba. "You are talking of non-violence, of love. Well, here is a problem before you. Can your love, your philosophy of non-violence, solve this problem? Communists are hiding somewhere around this village who are trying to take the lands from the landlords by the sword and distribute it to the landless. It is the philosophy of violence that we see in practice right before our eyes, and you have come to us. Well, how are you going to solve this problem through non-violence?" That old man didn't say all this, but the very fact that he got up, made a reference to the landlords, their thousands of acres, and that they, the landless, were the people who were producing all the corn, meant all that I have said to you just now.

It was a challenge to Vinoba's preaching of non-violence. I do not know what you or I would have done, even though we had the deepest faith in non-violence. Well, neither did Vinoba know

what to reply. To gain time he asked the old man, "How much land do you want?" Now that old *Harijan* was not speaking for himself alone, so he didn't reply immediately. He was quite serious about it all, and when Vinoba put the question, he had a little consultation with his companions. After two or three minutes he got up again and, again with palms touching said, "Sir, we want eighty acres of land." Eighty acres is not much land. It was a very modest demand he made, but Vinoba had no land to give him. He had no land in his pockets–in fact he has no pockets, he dresses as Gandhi dressed, in a loin cloth. Without hoping for anything to happen, Vinoba turned to the people around him and said, "Have you, gentlemen, heard what this old man has said? You have so much land, hunreds of acres, perhaps some of you thousands of acres. Do you think that all this land is yours? It belongs to you today. Perhaps it belonged to your father and grandfather at one time, but do you think for that reason this land belongs to you? Did you create it? Did your forefathers create it? Is it not God's creation? Have not all the children of God equal share in it?"

And so on in that vein he spoke for a few minutes. Then he said, "Is there anyone among you who is prepared to fulfil the demand that has just been made?"

When he put this question he had no hope that anyone was going to answer. He just put that question because he felt there was nothing else for him to do. And lo and behold! Someone gets up from the ranks of the land-owners, puts his palms together and says, "Sir, I am so and so and have five hundred acres of land. We are six brothers; I am the head of the family; on behalf of my brothers and myself, I am prepared to give a hundred acres for these landless people." Now Vinoba was dumb-founded; he was completely speechless. Here were these untouchables demanding eighty acres of land, and here was a landlord coming forward to give a hundred—twenty acres more than was wanted. That night, Vinoba did not sleep. All night long his mind was working, and from within a voice came again and again and said, "This is the answer. You have been roaming about these villages for so many days, trying to find an answer to the Communist violence. Here is the answer. From tomorrow, you will go on through the length and breadth of this country: you will walk from village to village asking for land, and giving the land that is given to you to the landless." Vinoba had a programme–a programme of non-violence–and he didn't stop to picture whether it would ever succeed.

Friends, as a young man I was Marxist, and an ardent worshipper at the shrine of Soviet Russia for many years. Even though I joined Gandhi and the national freedom movement, and went to prison, I kept on saying almost until the end, that we would not succeed in winning our freedom mereley by going to prison. This great powerful Empire could not be overthrown by this method. Well, you saw what happened. I do not say that the whole credit for what happened goes to Mahatma Gandhi alone. Part of the credit goes to you British people, your leaders, and undoubtedly to your government of that time. But you will all agree that a great part of the credit goes also to Mahatma Gandhi.

I am quite sure that if India had followed the traditional methods and used violence, perhaps even today we would not be free, and it would be very difficult to compute the cost in bitterness and hatred. So, althougth it might occur to other people, it never occured to Vinoba to ask whether the problems of exploitation, poverty, and inequality could be solved in this fashion, by going to the people and persuading them that what they had belonged to others also. From the next day, Vinoba started on a trek that still continues—after more than seven years now--walking every day from eight to ten miles, may be twelve miles

some days, and talking to the people. When he started, there were not more than half a dozen people with him; now there are thousands in practically all parts of India. In these last seven years, Vinoba and his co-workers have deen able to collect in this partial gift manner more than four and a half million acres of land. As compared with the land that is needed for all the landless people, this is not very much, but if you know what land means to the peasant, and how deeply attached he is to it, you will appreciate that it is nothing less than a miracle that four and a half million acres have been given away for the asking, without any kind of coercion being used.

True, may be half of this land is not worth cultivation and distribution (perhaps it may be put to some other use, such as pasture), yet this land too was at one time the personal property of some landlord, and he felt persuaded to surrender his ownership. The other half, I have no doubt, is fit for cultivation and much of it has already been distributed to the landless people. Ours is an agricultural country, and eighty per cent of the people still live in the villages; so you can imagine what this movement means for India. It might mean nothing for Britain, but in India it is one of the biggest things that has happened since Independence—*the* biggest thing, I should call it.

Gramdan

The movement arose by the surrender of part of a person's land, but in course of time many developments took place, of which the most important is what we call *Gramdan*. Suppose a landlord has one hundred acres of land and he is persuaded to give ten acres to some landless families in his village, that would be what we call *Bhoodan*, the earliest phase, by which name the movement is still known. But then as the idea spread and the people understood it, and a new kind of moral climate was created in the rural areas, *partial* sharing developed into *total* sharing, and we now have something like four thousand villages in which land has ceased to be individual property and has become communal—the property of the whole community.

Collectivisation in Communist Countries

In China, in Russia, and in other Communist countries, you know what happened in the wake of collectivisation. In Russia alone twenty million people were liquidated in one way or another. Now, in four thousand Indian villages much more has happend than forcible collectivisation brought about. If the farmers in all these Communist countries were given the option to choose between collectivisation and their own individual farming, I don't think there is much

doubt that the vast majority would choose the latter. All this process of forcible collectivisation has produced very little change in their minds and hearts—and you have instances of it in Yugoslavia, Poland and Hungary. Just at present, I am afraid China is preparing for a terrific drive of collectivisation. Probably Mao wants to complete in a couple of years what Stalin took ten years to finish. And what the cost of it will be God alone knows! I think, in a way, Imre Nagy has paid with his life for the Chinese collectivisation drive.

By propagating this philosophy of Love and Truth, (because it is the truth, whatever the economists or others may say), and persuading people that they should live together as one family, it has been possible to convert thousands of people and bring about a non-violent agrarian revolution of the completest kind in these 4,000 villages of India. This philosophy asserts, that whatever we have is a trust, and should be held and used as such, whether it be land or other kind of property, or whether it be skill, knowledge or experience. It is a trust that we hold for our fellow human beings and for our community. It is not meant for our personal enjoyment alone: we have a share in it, but only a share.

When I talk about these things to Western audiences, or to friends whom I meet here, the inevitable question is, "Are these things practicable?" Well, I do not know. It is for you to decide whether anything like this is practicable, and first of all whether there is a *need* for this philosophy of life to be practised in the West. And if you decide that there is a need, then the way you apply it, is also for you to decide.

Mahatma Gandhi was never tired of emphasizing that although it is necessary to improve society and to change the social, economic and political institutions of society, these changes will not mean very much unless man himself changes. Institutions are run by men, and unless men, too change and improve, mere external improvements will not take us very far.

I was an 'Environmentalist'

I told you just now that I was for many years a Marxist, and as a Marxist I was an "environmentalist". That is, I believed that if the environment was changed the individual would change, because the individual was a product of his environment. In psychology I was a "behaviourist", as all Marxists are—or should be. We were the product of our environment and therefore I believed that once capitalism

and feudalism were abolisehd, and the private profit motive eliminated from life, everything would be all right. You would have the good society, and the good man, and everything. Trotsky talked of even the cooks becoming Platos and Aristotles in a Communist society. That was the dream !

What happened in Russia

We have all seen the ideals fading away one by one, and the idols breaking. I saw it, and it was a very difficult process for me to live through. I saw that in Russia there was this tremendous revolution, the like of which history had not seen before. Capitalism and feudalism were destroyed from the roots, and the private profit motive was destroyed. But what happened? Did the good society emerge? Nothing. All the ideals of Communism--or at least what I consider to be the ideals of Communism—seem to me to have been buried fathoms deep under the Russian soil. The very people who made the revolution, became after the success of the revolution, thirsty for one another's blood ; and blood flowed on the streets of Moscow and other cities like water. And that is still going on.

And I saw what was happening in the democratic countries that were trying to create a socialist society. I found that ideals of socialism were becoming fainter, dimmer. Nationa-

lization at one time used to be such an exciting and promising slogan. But today we find bureaucracy! We find that the relationships between the producer, the consumer, the management, and other sectors of society have become frozen. There is no *socialism* left in the life of the people.

Socialism, a Way of Life

Socialism for me was always a way of life. It represented a set of values to which we owed allegiance voluntarily and which we tried to put into practice in our lives. These values we din't see developing anywere as a result of merely institutional changes, whether economic or political.

Now, friends, I do not know if you are faced with the same problems as we are—the problems of socialism, democracy, the co-operative movement, industrialization. We are concerned with these problems because we are at the cross-roads in India. Which way do we go? Do we follow the West? Do we industrialize in the same manner? Do we accept the same ideals of life for ourselves? I personally shudder to think that we would go the same way, follow the same path. There must be something wrong in the foundations, in the very springs of civilisation, that in the course of a lifetime there should be

two world wars. There must be something wrong somewhere, must there not? And is it not necessary to find what this is? And now we are in the midst of this cold war and one does't know what will happen. Millions and millions of people throughout the world are living in fear. I think the American people live more under fear than any other people in the world, although there is perhaps as much fear in Russia as in America. Friends, I am not a Westerner, and it is not my job, nor would you be prepared to take it from me for a moment, to criticize Western civilisation; but as an Easterner and an Indian, I cannot but think of these problems so that I may decide for my own country which way we should go. But I have again digressed.

The Double Revolutionary

What I was saying was that Mahatma Gandhi insisted that while there has to be a social revolution the starting point of that revolution must be man himself. It is only through a *human* revolution that we can have a social revolution that is meaningful. And therefore he always said that he was a *double* revolutionary and that his revolution was a dual revolution--internal as well as external--human as well as social. Without the internal revolution, the extenral was meaningless.

Now, you have in this movement of which I have just spoken an example of this dual revolution. In these 4,000 villages there has been an external change. Land has ceased to be individual property and has become common property. The village community in an assembly decides what is to be done with this land--whether it should be farmed collectively as a single unit, or whether it should be reallocated on some just basis among the members of the community who are prepared to farm the land. The whole decision as to what should be done is in the hands of this small village community. This is an economic revolution of the most fundamental nature.

There is no pary in India to day, neither the ruling Congress party of Mr. Nehru, nor the Socialist party, nor the Communist party, nor any other party, that has the courage to say that if it were in power it would communize land and abolish individual ownership of land. The Communists would certainly like to do so, and many Socialists also, perhaps would like to do so, but it is impossible for them even to speak about it now. If you take all the election manifestos and all the programmes of these parties, which all have their own agrarian programmes, and put them all together, it doesn't total up to very much; a few land reforms, redistribution of land,

fixation of ceilings, uneconomic holdings of land to be made rent-free, and a few things of that nature, which are certainly not Communist or Socialist programmes. They are desirable land reforms, that is all; but a bourgeois government, a liberal Capitalist government may well carry through those reforms.

I am saying this so that you may appreciate what a tremendous revolution it means, at least in these 4,000 villages, for the landowners voluntarily to say, "Our lands belong to the village community, to everyone." Nor is the conception of community restricted to the village alone. I should like to emphasise this: "The community embraces the entire world community of human being." When Vinoba says, "This land does not belong to you alone, it belongs to the community," he has in mind not only the village community but also the British community, and the Russian community, the Pakistan community and the American community. The idea is that whatever is on this earth belongs jointly to the human family. I have a share in what you have, and you have a share in what I have. It is this philosophy which Vinoba is preaching.

The New Slogan of Jai Hind

Those of you who have been to India may know that we have various forms of greeting.

Most of them have a religious origin although some are just mere social courtesy. During the freedom movement, a form of greeting arose which became very popular because Mr. Nehru and all the political leaders of India popularized it--the two words, "Jai Hind." "Jai" means "victory," and "Hind" of course means "India." "Jai Hind," "Victory to India." It was the Indian equivalent of your "*V*"—for Victory Sign.

Now during the past year, Vinoba has quietly introduced into our life a new form of greeting which is very symbolic and significant. After he finishes his evening talk, he folds up his hands and says, "Jai Jagat." "Jai" means "Victory" again, and "Jagat" means "the World". He is no longer talking of victory to India, he is talking of victory to the world. And please imagine that he is probably talking to a group of villagers at a place that is perhaps thirty miles from the nearest railway station, a remote interior village where perhaps the people do not even know the names of all the Indian provinces. May be you will find people who have never travelled on a railway and have no idea what a city like Bombay looks like. Vinoba is already trying to give them this idea of world citizenship. "We don't belong to this little village, nor to this country of India, but to the whole world." And therefore, while the principle of communal ownership finds pra-

ctical expression in ownership by the village community, the latter is really only representative of the whole world community.

The Wave of *Dans*

Now, friends, we have the ambition to extend this movement to every village in India. We have 550,000 villages; do you imagine what a stupendous task we have ahead of us? We have succeeded only in 4,000 villages as yet, and we are not going to be content with applying this principle to the agrarian sphere alone. Already Vinoba has extended it to all spheres *Buddhidan*, *Shramdan*, *Jivandan*. You see, "dan" is a Sanskrit word which means gift or sharing and it is added to so many things. Suppose there is a doctor or a lawyer or a professor. He has "Buddhi"—knowledge, and he should make "Buddhidan", that is, he should share his knowledge with others. Whatever skill he has he should share, just as the land owner and property owner has to share. Likewise with "Sampattidan". Those who are earning something should share what they earn with others. This concept of sharing he has now made universal, but the fact remains that the emphasis today is in the agrarian sphere, because we are not very many and cannot do everying at once. But just as from partial sharing of land we have gone to communal ownership, so we have been thinking

how in the fields of industry, commerce, and the professions etc; we can go forward from sharing of incomes to a new kind of industrial organization where there is human fellowship; and where, instead of impersonal rules and laws, human relationships bind and run the organization and govern its life.

We have not yet discovered the best way of doing this and we are hoping that, as a result of our tour in Britain and the rest of Europe, we may be able to find an answer. Several experiments are being made, here and on the continent also, in a new kind of industrial organization. I do not think that the perfect way has yet been found but perhaps those experiments may help us in our country to take a few more steps forward.

Change through Non-violence

Now, before I conclude, I should like to speak of another programme of this movement which might be of greater interest to you than the programme of economic and social change through love and Non-violence.

I started by saying that the whole world today is concerned with the question of peace and war. The movement of which I have spoken goes to the very roots of this question. If human civilisation, if our economic and political institu-

tions, were based on foundations such as I have described, there would be no cause for struggle, for any kind of strife. But that might appear to be a very slow process, and unless a moral and spiritual genius in the West arises who could show the way, it would seem perhaps an impractical idea But the question of war and peace is immediate, and therefore an immediate answer is being sought.

Shanti Sena

In India, Vinoba is trying to do something which might be an immediate answer, although it cannot be the real answer because this comes only when you go down to the roots of life. There is a cold war being waged not only between America and Russia but you and me between every one of you, a perpetual cold war. Until that cold war is resolved, I do not think the cold wars that appear on the surface will disappear for ever. You may solve one problem but another will arise. However, the *immediate* programme that Vinoba has placed before us is the programme of *Shanti Sena*. "Shanti" means "peace" and "Sena" means "army". Vinoba has been saying for the last few years that India should unilaterally adopt a policy of disarmament, irrespective of what Pakistan may be doing, or of what our powerful neighbour China is doing or

our other powerful neighbour (because Russia is also our neighbour), or for that matter of what Britain or America may or may not be doing. Irrespective of what others may be doing, we ourselves should adopt this policy of disarmament. We should not wait till others have given up wrong to give up ourselves what we consider to be wrong. If violence is wrong, let us eschew it, irrespective of whether others have done so or not. Now this is a very bold thing to say, but Vinoba knows that by merely *saying it* it will not be done. As you know, Mr. Nehru is very popular and undisputed leader of the country, but even if Mr. Nehru were to go to the Indian Parliament to-day and say, "We are proposing to start a policy of gradual disarmament," I am sure the Parliament and the people would reply, "Mr. Nehru is getting old. He had better give up and hand over to a younger person who can hold the reins of Government more firmly in his hands." Even Mr. Nehru would be pensioned off if he spoke as Prime Minister of a policy like that. The people's minds are not *ready*. They do not see any alternative to arms. Well, Vinoba is trying to create that alternative. He is proposing to the people that it is possible to defend ourselves without arms, and that any nation can defend itself without arms. Who would have believed that it was possible for India to fight

for her freedom without arms? Yet, it was possible. We had a great leader who showed that it was possible and it worked. Well, if it was possible to fight for freedom without arms why cannot we defend that freedom without arms?

The Will to Do and Die

I went a few days ago to Oxford, just to see the place. I saw written on the walls of several colleges the names of those young men who had fallen in the war of 1914, and again in the war of 1939 young men had fallen on the battle-fields for their country. Why did they fall? Why did they give up the most precious thing that they had, their lives? Why did they do it? Were they compelled? No. There was a climate of opinion, that induced them to defend their country. "We must fight and die for our country!" A noble idea– I am not trying to run it down, but I am saying that it is possible for young men to sacrifice their lives in this way because that is how they are trained, those are the values of the civilization in which they live. Now, don't you think that it is also possible for young men to be educated to lay down their lives without trying to take the life of anyone else? That is a still higher and nobler principle, is it not? "We refuse to be slaves; we refuse to bow before anyone. To the last man we shall die." Do you think there

is any country in the world that can conquer such a people? Impossible! Such a people can never be conquered.

This is the lesson Vinoba is trying to teach. It is a very difficult lesson because, all around, different lessons are being taught. Vinoba says that before we presume to ask the government of India to start on this policy of disarmament, we should demonstrate that at least for our internal security, it is possible to do without the militia. You know, in spite of Mahatma Gandhi, in spite of Lord Buddha, and Lord Mahavira and the whole tradition of Ahimsa and non-violence in our country, in spite of our vegetarianism, the situation is such that if there is any kind of dispute in India that gets out of hand, on the linguistic or other question, violence breaks out. There is violence on the streets of Bombay, or Calcutta, or may be somewhere else. And then what happens? The militia is called to suppress this "disorder". And the disorder is suppressed. Stones are answered with bullets, law and order is established, and we say there is peace. Vinoba says, "This is not peace, this is an illusion of peace, peace that has been established by the forces of violence. Therefore, let us create in India those forces which will be responsible for internal security, so that we can say to all our Chief Ministers in the States (who are responsible

for internal security, and not Mr. Nehru,) "We don't need your militia. Let your police control the traffic on the streets and perform such service for the people, but we don't need you for enforcing law and order."

For this purpose he is trying to create this *Shanti Sena*. He has given a call for 75,000 volunteers, that is, one soldier of peace for every area with a population of 5,000 souls. He should then be trained and be engaged in whole-time service of that communtiy. This means that if a doctor, or a lawyer, or a shop-keeper or a millhand wants to join this peace army, he will have to resign his job, give up whatever he is doing, and devote his whole life to what Vinoba calls "the selfless service of the people." For if there is an outbreak of violence, this volunteer must have some moral authority. How will he be able to control these who have got out of hand and establish peace if the people do not even know him? Why should they listen to him? The man who goes to the people with a message of peace should have some moral authority, and this moral authority can come only by *selfless service* and by no other way. You may be a great scientist, a great politician, or a great something, but that does not give you the right to go to the people and ask them to listen to you. You have that right only when you have been in their service.

But these volunteers have to live, and their dependents also. What will they do when they give up their business, or their job, or their profession? Vinoba says that it will be the resposibility of these 5,000 people, in whose service the volunteer is engaged, to keep him, to maintain him, to serve him, in return for the services that he performs. He will live in simplicity, and not ask for more than the satisfaction of his primary needs; but those needs will have to be fulfilled by the community. He will have to visit every home in that little locality and establish personal acquaintance. He will find out what the difficulties of these people are and help them in any way he can.

The Non-partisan soldier

The responsibility of peace is not a partisan responsibility, so the soldier of peace must be non-partisan and cannot belong to any political party. He should not believe in caste differences or untouchability, but should believe in the equality of all religions. These and similar qualifications the volunteer should have. These conditions are doubtless rather difficult to fulfil. If these conditions had not been there, thousands of volunteers might have joined and may be by now Vinoba would have got these 75,000 people; but they would have been completely undependable people. No commander of an army could

depend on such a force. A few hundred people have joined this Peace Army, and I am happy to say that both my wife and I are among them.

Now friends, I have tried to describe to you what is being done in India. I hope it has been of some interest to you. I am conscious that I have taken too much of your time but you have been very patient with me and very kind to me for which I am very grateful. I hope that what I have told you will induce some of you to take further interest in what is being done. I do not think we are in a position to be of any service to you, although we would be happy to give you any help that you may wish to have; but let me say that we need the goodwill and co-operation of all of you in this work that we are doing, which I consider to be the most important thing that is happening, not only in India, but in the whole of Asia.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank you very cordially.

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